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and the figure of the "Idea of Beauty" (ll. 32-34),

Falling in wreaths thro' many a startled star,
Like woman's hair 'mid pearls, until, afar,
It lit on hills Achaian, and there dwelt.

There is also another interesting reason for associating *Al Aaraaf* with Shelley. In later critical writing,³ Poe gave emphatic warning against the nebulous sort of vagueness which reading Shelley breeds in young persons, especially, he specified, the reading of *Prometheus Unbound*. Was he thinking of his own youthful experience? And was the wild incoherence of *Al Aaraaf*, which so puzzles critics, but a species of Shelley hypnotism that affected the susceptible youth? Certainly on this ground *Al Aaraaf* is explicable. And it has never been satisfactorily explained on any other ground.

It would seem, therefore, that Poe has closer relations to the earlier poetic romanticists of England than is commonly supposed. It would, though, be hazardous to class him with them. There still remains too large an unexplained residuum in Poe's poetry.

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ANOTHER STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE'S STAGE

The recent appearance of the last volume of the First Folio edition of Shakespeare (Charlotte Porter, principal editor) calls attention to one feature of this edition which is of peculiar interest and which, because it is scattered through the notes of the various volumes, may easily escape notice. This feature is the detailed study of the plays as to their staging in the Elizabethan theater.

³ 1844. See Harrison, XI, 255; XII, 32; and XVI, 148. The reference to *Prometheus* appeared in 1845. Four years later a portion of this article was revised and reprinted, and for *Prometheus* was substituted *Alastor*.

Miss Porter assumes that the Globe theater had a stage essentially like that shown on the *Messalina* title page (*A. and C.* 173) with the added assumption of an alcove stage *behind* the rear stage (*Much Ado*, 129; *A. Y. L.* 171; *R. and J.* 147) though this is, I take it, only another way of referring to the tiring room. She especially emphasizes the side stages—the spaces leading to the doors on either side the projecting rear stage. Of these Miss Porter makes much use: to stage asides which then really cease to be such (*A. C.* 176; *Cym.* 160; 194; 198; *O.* 238); to "simulate places a little distance apart" (*M. for M.* 131; *A. C.* 174); for concealment and observation (*A. C.* 174; *O.* 238; *III H.* VI. 138; *H. VIII.* 174); and for the "trees" of which more presently. This recognition of the side stages also leads to a greater emphasis than has usually been placed on the outer doors to the front stage. In the notes of a large number of plays the significance of these is carefully pointed out (e.g., *O.* or *W. T.*): how it is established in the auditor's mind and how it is changed as the play progresses. The use of sign boards is so far as I have observed neither suggested nor discussed. This emphasis on the location of scenes has in turn led the editor to make much of what she calls "travel," "journeying" or "sceneshifting" scenes, in which Shakespeare carefully led his audience to change the scene, and hence the significance of various parts of the stage and of the doors. (*T. of S.* III, 2; *A. C.* II, 3, 4; III, 1, 2; *Troilus* IV, 4; *Cym.* IV, 3; V, 5; *O.* I, 1; etc.) So important does the editor consider this that she even makes it a basis for act division (*Timon*, 125; *Troilus* 197; *M. for M.* 155). In this recognition of a real problem and this attempt to solve it the First Folio edition has made perhaps its greatest contribution to the study of Elizabethan staging.

Other interesting points are suggested. Miss Porter is not adverse to conjecturing many properties not previously accepted by students. (The incline; *A. and C.* 176, 178; the molehill, *III H.* VI, 144; *II H.* VI, 196; curtains for mists, *Tempest* 171; a fountain, *M. for M.* 134; a wicket gate, *W. T.* 135; bow of a vessel,

O. 236.) An interesting but I fear unwarranted use of the balcony occurs in *R. and J.* 228, where Romeo enters the rear stage vault, it is suggested, through a trap door in the upper stage; and another in *H. V.* 222, where the French army is supposed to gather there as "on yonder hill." This willingness to accept new and somewhat extraordinary things is especially noticeable as regards the garden, orchard, wood, forest setting—a combination of trees, hedges, etc., which is referred to in so many plays under one name or another that Miss Porter assumes it to have remained as a permanent setting near one of the stage doors. That it is conceived of as made up of small trees appears from *Much Ado* 144, and *R. and J.* 230. Almost any one of these cases by itself is so weak as nearly to appear ludicrous, but when one takes account of all of them and of the evidence of other Elizabethan plays the evidence seems unshakeable. Perhaps this setting was not always left on the stage, but if it were really used under all these various aliases it was certainly of very common occurrence and becomes of the greatest importance.

For as soon as the existence of a "tree-setting" is admitted few Elizabethan plays can be staged with any sort of regard for modern picture-stage methods; one is inevitably forced into the opinion that the Elizabethan stage was fundamentally "incongruous," medieval, plastic. Miss Porter does not dodge this conclusion; most of the plays, since each introduces indoor scenes, become in consequence "incongruous." Indeed Miss Porter goes so far as to suppose trees on the stage of *Pericles* when the front stage represents the deck of a ship and the stage its cabin (165).

In view of this the scrupulous employment of the rear stage even when two or three stools are used (*A. C.* 177; *Cor.* 147) is rather amazing. Probably the reason lies in the assumption that all interiors were staged in the "little curtained-off compartment"; all large exteriors in front (*T. N.* 154). Properties are sometimes allowed on the front stage (*O.* 236; *M. for M.* 184) but it is considered necessary to explain that each is in the last act. "Thrones" are placed in the rear stage (*III*

H. VI. 141; *H. VIII.* 153) as are banquet scenes (*H. VIII.* 158).

One use of the rear stage to which the editor calls attention is interesting and convincing, and though not new is worked out more fully than by previous writers. It is the employment of the rear stage, especially the great central entrance in its back wall, as the gate to a city (*III. H. VI.* 169), the front of a house (*Troilus* 194) and the Monument (*A. and C.* 177). In these cases the rear stage, it is assumed, "was denuded of curtains so as to show bare walls and the double portal barred at the back of the stage" (*A. and C.* 177). From the note, *Cor.* 148, one concludes that the reference is not to the removal of the stage curtains but rather of the inner hangings, for a certain short conversation (*I.* 4) is considered long enough to allow the stripping of the rear stage, presumably concealed, and *I. H. VI.* 142 seems to imply that the balcony was arranged "at the top like a battlemented 'turret top.'" Are we to understand some sort of scenery?

The principal objections which appear against the views presented in this edition are these: the projecting rear stage enclosed on three sides hardly seems practicable for a theater such as the Globe; the insistence on the use of the rear stage for all interiors is illogical and unfounded in view of the innumerable "clashes" which then occur, especially in non-Shakespearean plays, and the acceptance by Miss Porter of the medieval staging in other particulars. But neither objection diminishes the interest of her conclusions nor the general value of her suggestions. The First Folio study of the staging of Shakespeare amounts, both in the space devoted to it and in its real value, to a very considerable contribution to the subject.

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